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dances in the mourning for him. All varieties of brothers within the clan are included, the activity being really more a clan than a fraternal function.

Among brothers within the clan fighting is not allowed, but among brothers who belong to adjoining clans warfare is quite common.

Although the Murngin and the other seven tribes who share their type of kinship have a very strong feeling against the younger brother's copulating with an older brother's wife under ordinary circumstances, there is a period among the peoples practicing the Gunabibi ceremony when sexual "license" is recognized and even demanded between brothers and their wives. This is, however, strictly regulated; only brothers from more distant clans would be invited and allowed to exchange wives for ceremonial copulation. The tribal ideal of this custom is that a few nights before the end of the ceremony older brothers call their consanguine younger brothers and ask the latter to go to the nearby camp of the distant brothers in attendance at this ceremony, taking the older men's wives with them. The older brothers in the visitors' camp do likewise. The men and women paint themselves and go into the bush in the nearby jungle for copulation. The last night one woman may stay with several men, for a larger proportion of men than women always attend, since wifeless brothers usually enter into this ceremony. After a man has had intercourse with a tribal brother's wife, the husband puts his sweat on both of his guest's legs "so that he won't be sick from it." The men meanwhile have been giving presents to the women for some time before the ceremony and the women turn the gifts over to their husbands, although they frequently keep part for themselves. In reality, there is an exchange of presents, as well as of wives, among these more distant brothers.

The above is a tribal ideal. Actually, copulation purely for pleasure starts early in the ceremony, while the last night's indulgence is a purification rite supposed to cleanse a man and woman of impurities and to avoid illness during the period between the present ceremony and the next. The men and women have clandestine meetings, but it is generally known which people are having these assignations in the surrounding bush or jungle, and many broadly humorous remarks are passed by both sexes about their various lovers. However, some men and women would not enter into this earlier secret copulation, but would wait until the last night.[6]

[6] The ritual place of wife exchange and its significance are treated in the chapter on Murngin totemism, particularly pages 306-308.

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supposed to allow the water to come through. The holes are filled with leaves and grass. A shell full of water (E) is placed at the head end of the larger circle, and a rock (F) is placed in the channel. This represents a rock found in the actual well and the fresh water which comes out of the spring. The sick man is placed in the larger circle which is the totem well. The male members of the clan gather about it and sing the garma song, which particularly describes some activity surrounding the clan well and identifies the clan as a separate unit or part of the moiety. If a Dua man were ill, the members would sing the two old creator women, who, on coming back from hunting food, found their totemic emblems had been stolen by the men. The names of the women, references to the types of totems, and the shouts of the men who had stolen the emblems would be part of the song sequence. Red ocher is then sung by the chorus while a man is preparing some red ocher on the stone found in the smaller circle, and water is poured over the patient. The red ocher is then rubbed all over the body of the sick man. When this operation is completed the singing stops and the ceremony is over.

The Relation of a Prophylactic Ritual to Healing Magic

The relation of this ritual to the art of curing by magic is the same as the relation between preventive medicine and ordinary doctoring in our society. In modern society, preventive medicine recognizes the fundamental causes of disease and tries to prevent their being present and active in a community so that none of the members can be made ill by them; therapeutic medicine becomes active if preventive medicine fails. The disease by this time has struck certain members of the community; the cause must be removed, but by different techniques—different not in kind, but only in degree. Both are scientific methods and both combat certain types of diseases which fit into certain scientific concepts and classifications.

The prophylactic totemic ritual averts illness from anyone who participates in it and from the group generally; on the contrary, anyone who does not participate in it will be ill. Illness and general dysphoria are prevented by removing the accumulated ritualistic uncleanliness through the totemic rites of purification. During the year certain people become ritualistically unclean by breaking certain taboos and by a lax observance of the tribal laws. Magic and ritual cleanse them and the society generally.

It has been pointed out above that the source of ritual power which

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we circumcised those young men. That blood made her sick." One old man spoke up and said, "That blood made her sick. It makes women ill when they touch us after the Djungguan. It is the spirit in that blood that does this. It is the totem, not the wooden emblem, but the spirit inside with the power name. He is in that blood. A woman cannot touch it or it will make her sick." 753 826 784

Smaller rituals are performed by two or three individuals to cure someone who is ailing. Frequently women rub red ocher over their bodies because of an ailment, this being but an abbreviation of its use in the larger ceremonies. Red ocher string is tied around the head or body to cure a headache or abdominal pain. This act, too, is but a shortening of the ritual in which decorated string is placed around the head or body in the larger ceremonies. 755

Larger rituals are definitely used to remove pain. Certain parts of the Djungguan are designed to take away the pain from the boy who is being circumcised. The women relatives whip themselves in order to transfer the pain from the boy to themselves. The head of the boy's penis, they also say, is a turtle's head, so the cutting of the foreskin cannot hurt him since it is not his flesh being cut but that of the animal. These statements are also supposed to remove the pain from the boy. 785 826 831

Other rituals, which assure success in war, are demonstrably only elaborated magical practices. The gaingar spears represent the head of the Dua and Yiritja moieties. The souls of the dead of the moieties are supposed to be in each weapon. The ceremonial throwing of the spears to assure the killing of an enemy and to prevent the killing of their own men is definitely of a magical nature, the power of these ceremonies depending upon the souls' clustering around the spear just as the power of the magical killing stick depends upon the souls which cluster about its point. 778 789 775

The bone magic ceremony used in the maringo fighting (see Chapter VI, Warfare) is also an elaborate ceremony focused upon the magical idea of the soul's being associated with a bone relic. In earlier parts of this chapter the individual treats the bone in a ceremonial way to practice his magic against his enemies. Both the gaingar and the maringo ceremony from one point of view are elaborate magical practices participated in by the group and led by the ceremonial or war leader.

All the rituals, particularly the Narra, which celebrates the ascendancy of the clan totem, are commonly used to purify the group of 751 783

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any uncleanliness which might cause sickness and death. The group baptism in the Narra ceremonies is explicitly considered by the Murngin to be a method of preventing illness and a way of washing away the ritual uncleanliness which causes it. Participation in the Gunabibi has the exact opposite effect to non-participation, since it too prevents sickness and death of the individuals who are a part of it. The whole mourning ceremony is consciously an effort to prevent sickness from occurring to any of the members of the group by forcing the contagious soul away from the land of the living and into the land of the dead.

The Nature of Murngin Dal (Mana or Power)

Murngin mana which lies in the rituals is both helpful and harmful. Those things which are powerful and strong because of an extramundane quality are said to be *dal*, which means they have mana and possess spiritual power.

Objects Which Are Dal Because of Primary Relationship with the Totem.—A catalogue of the elements in Murngin society which are dal indicates that all the objects within their material culture can be dal provided they have been given a power name by someone who has the right to give it. Old men are the only ones who know and can use these sacred names. Most of the objects in the material culture which possess the dal quality have it only because of the power name. Dal names fit into the general classification of "inside," while ordinary words in daily use are "outside." The men's sacred camp, the place where all the sacred totemic rituals are held, is described as "inside," the common camp as "outside." The water in the clan well is considered common, ordinary, and outside, whereas the subterranean water down below, where the totems and the ancient ancestors live, is inside. All the very sacred rituals are inside, while the ordinary garma type is outside. The totem, totemic emblems, totemic ancestors and ceremonial objects are all dal. All the objects, then, which have the quality of dal may or may not be sacred in their own right, but in all cases they obtain their power because of a special connection with the inside or sacred.

Objects Which Are Dal Because Connected with the Dead.—Another category of objects is also classed as dal, but the items in this group are not necessarily associated with a totem in a primary relationship. These objects include the bones of a man killed directly by black magic or by an enemy clansman, pieces of a spear found in a wound of a dead clansman, bark or wood saturated in his death's

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Native Interpretation.—The forked sticks with the pole across are the house of the two women. The ritual of the women who answer the two snakes and beat the ground with their clubs parallels that of the two old women in Section D. The men in the bush are the snake. The boys who are hanging from the rafter are flying foxes. When the women move back and the men sit down in a line under the rafter, "This means one people, and the rafter is the snake and the people are Muit food.—They are all the same as the birimbir of Bapa himself. —They are Muit and they are one people." When the boys crawl from behind the line of men to one end of the line, they are brought to the tail of Muit and "They are the young snakes of that big one." When the boys crawl up to the head of the snake and receive the food from the head (the Yiritja snake sitting on the forked pole), "This means the children all want food [the children of the snake] and the snake spews out the two women and they [the children] eat it [the two women] and give it back to him [spit out the food again]."

All the above was told to me by the leaders of the Gunabibi, both during the actual portrayal of the ceremony itself and in conversations during the hours of rest between the morning and evening dances.

The significance of the flying fox to the Murngin is that he is a mokoi or trickster spirit of the dead who lives in the bush. He is a generally recognized symbol to all of the spirit that does not go into the water hole but goes out into the bush or the jungle or to the Morning Star Island at time of death (see Barnumbir myth, page 524). —"A flying fox is all the same as the dead spirit from the bush. It is Dua."[18]

J. Ceremonial Purification

1. The men and women paint themselves with red ocher and kangaroo fat. The neophytes are brushed with smoking ironwood branches.

[18] When an uncircumcised child dies, its mother has the wings of a flying fox painted on her shoulders and the body of the fox painted on her abdomen. "This flying fox is the birimbir spirit of that dead baby. This is done for both Yiritja and Dua mothers and babies." The same painting is sometimes put on a woman when she has had her first menses. The woman is placed inside a hut and, when she wants to move, is given two yam sticks with which to turn over. The yam-stick movement is ceremonial and symbolic of the movement of the two old women who walked with the aid of a yam stick in each hand.

The condition of the boys, or women who are menstruating, of the mother of a dead child, etc., is said to be djo-ak, which means ritually unclean. "If a mother or mari or yeppa sleeps close to dead baby that sweat comes out and makes the mother unclean. Women put red ocher on after this. No one can take food from these women until the bones are dug up and she is painted by her husband with flying fox."

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1. A week or ten days afterward all the men and women who have participated for the first time in the ceremony are painted with red ocher and kangaroo fat, at least twice. The last time a fire is made of ironwood, and green branches are held in it and brushed all over the initiate.

Native Interpretation.—This ritual is to keep the participants from becoming ill and to prevent them from being hurt by any of the animals seen in the Gunabibi dances. The use of red ocher for purification purposes is general. It is one of the recognized mechanisms of the Murngin ritually to prevent or stop sickness. At the end of the Gunabibi the following comment was made in a variety of forms: "After the next rain a man can come out and see a lot of emus and kangaroos and all kinds of animals. He will say, 'My word, we sang him good in that last Gunabibi.'"

THE ULMARK CEREMONY

The Ulmark ceremony is performed in the dry season. It may last a month, a season, or possibly two dry seasons. In rare cases it may be shortened to a few days. The length of time depends on the leader and the old men associated with him.

Like the Djungguan and the Gunabibi, the Ulmark too is an age-grading ceremony. The boy who undergoes its initiation is placed definitely in the men's age grade. The Ulmark is recent in this area and is still being learned by the older men. It is not yet felt to be obligatory for all men to pass through it to attain social adulthood.

Human blood is not used in the Ulmark ceremony. It is the only one of the four major ceremonies belonging to the Wawilak cycle that does not use blood. Kangaroo grease serves more or less the same symbolical function.

New feather strings are made in preparation for the Ulmark, to be used as ornaments in it. The work of collecting the feathers and making the string is supposed to take a month or more and depends on the supply of feathers available and the amount desired by the men for the dance. Four men who later play the rôle of kangaroos gather the feathers from the various camps and take them to the men's ceremonial grounds at the camp where the ceremony is to be held.

The first three sections are largely preliminary. The first two sections take place simultaneously.

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884 S. The Forked-pole Dance Is Repeated

1. In the camp several old men have made three or four stone fires as if they were going to cook kangaroo. The women dance out from [535] the general camp to the forked pole where the two women climb it as earlier in the ceremony. The men come out of the ceremonial ground and surround the women on the pole. They roar like the thunder. The women jump on the ground into the chorus of men, and the two men climb up on the pole and then jump on the ground. A chorus of women dances outside the group of men.

Native Interpretation.—The natives' interpretation is the same as for the first performance of the dance (Section P, page 326).

884 T. The Stone Fire and Snake Dance

884 1. The old men build a stone fire and the men inhale the smoke and ●783 squat over the fire in order to allow the smoke to enter their anuses.

1. All the men go to the general camp and divide into groups around the various stone fires the old men have made. The women dance around them. All the men hold their heads over the fires and inhale the smoke and heat. They also squat over the fire to allow the smoke to enter the anal opening. Men, women, and young boys then [302] paint themselves with red ocher and kangaroo grease.

884 *Native Interpretation.*—When the men inhale the smoke, "this 713 means so we can eat any kind of food." When they put their anuses 783 over the fire, "This is like the Wawilak women did when that baby was born." The women go through this same healing and purificatory rite today. The whole fire ceremony "means just the same as the place in the Gunabibi [Section I] when men go along the ridgepole and get food handed to them."

U. The Palm Nut Bread Is Eaten

884 1. The bread is divided and eaten by the men. The ironwood-leaf 783 purification is held and the neophytes are steamed.

1. Several days later, possibly a week or more, the women bake a large palm nut loaf. The ceremonial bread is divided and eaten by all the men who participated in the ceremony. Another big stone fire is made. New body ornaments are placed on each man, and green bushes are held in the hands of each mature male to symbolize the trees that surround their ceremonial ground. The men dance around

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the stone fire, and the women around them. Ironwood leaves (maipin) are put in the fire and a smoking branch is brushed over all the males and females who have been in the ceremony. To make a heavy steam, wet grass is put on the fire and the neophytes placed over it so that both mouth and anus are supposedly filled with purifying steam. This is to allow the young men to eat the large game which up to this time has been taboo to them.

Native Interpretation.—All the informants insisted that the interpretation of the steaming of the initiates is the same as in the Djunggwan (Section H). The eating of the bread is a general symbol of communion which will be treated later.

General Summary of the Sections of the Ulmark

The ritual dances of the Ulmark ceremony divide themselves into two main groups of symbols: (1) the food animals' running away from the two women, and (2) the snake's swallowing the women and animals.

THE MARNDIELLA CEREMONY

A. Preparations

1. The fathers are consulted. The boys are decorated.

1. The Marndiella is used as a circumcision rite and belongs to the Wawilak group. It is usually held when it is felt that certain boys are too large to be allowed to remain uncircumcised for another year and when the time is short and the wet season is at hand. In other words, it is used when the Djunggwan ceremony is considered too long for the time at their command. It is the shortest of the four general tribal ceremonies centered around the Wawilak. The Marndiella never comes first by preference and is only used as an expedient. However, at times the Marndiella is prolonged, principally because of the Murngin's keen pleasure in all ceremonies and because it is felt to be not quite fitting to rush a ceremony through in so short a time.

The ceremony starts the afternoon before the circumcision is to take place. The leader in this ritual, as in all the others, is a clan ceremonial director. He confers with the fathers of the boys to gain their permission, or to set a time for the circumcision when the fathers have requested him to make their boys young men. On the afternoon of the day chosen to start the ceremony the boys are taken to the

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852 yor-o), honey (Bar-a-gar-la), and honeybee hive (Warl-kin-di). While
535 the leader sings, the chorus shrilly cries, "Ai—ai!!" Two birds who frequent the salt plains (Ta-bu-ta-bu) dance in while the chorus sings the name of these birds. The leader taps them with his singing sticks and makes them go over and sit down in the line formed by the chorus. The following dancers appear and are treated in the same way by the leader: honeybee, tiger snake (darpa), leech (djal-ng-nin), and two dogs. The hat worn by one of the dogs is knocked off.

The whole chorus then dance Dua honeybee. After this they tie bunches of leaves to their ankles and, beginning with the flying fox, the entire sequence of dances is performed again.

[773] *Native Interpretation.*—"That line of men come in with blood and feathers on them. They are snakes and they dance around the camp of the two Wawilak women."

852 F. The Circumcision and Steaming Rites
304
783 1. The same dances are used for the steaming ceremony of the Marndiella as in the Djungguan.

1. The boy is then circumcised. The same procedure and method of cutting are followed here as in the Djungguan (Section H), and the purificatory fire rite is performed in exactly the same manner.

Native Interpretation.—The same set of symbolical ideas operates here as in the Djungguan.

000 The next chapter turns to a consideration of the Djunkgao myth and ritual cycle, and the reader may turn immediately to the interpretative chapter if he is interested in discovering the Murngin symbolic processes.

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COMPARISON OF THE WAWILAK AND DJUNKGAO CONSTELLATIONS

The western Wawilak myth tells of the wanderings from the south of the two Wongar sisters who name the animals, localities, and wells of the individual clans, as well as the countries, in their progress northward. In the eastern Djunkgao myth two sisters do exactly the same things except that they travel by water and by land. The Wawilak sisters break the fundamental rule of clan exogamy by committing incest with one of their own clansmen. The Djunkgao sisters do the same thing. The only difference in this part of the two myths is that the Wawilak adds the menstruation uncleanliness to the incest impurity. In the third and final element of both myths the ritual paraphernalia and mysteries are obtained by the men from the women and the latter admit their subordination: the Wawilak women tell the men how to conduct their rituals and give them up to the men; the Djunkgao lose their totems and therefore their rituals are stolen by the men. These two myths with their essential identity of plot have superficially elaborated their rituals into quite different patterns; fundamentally they are the same. The Narra rituals focus their attention on the individual clan wells, on their clan totems, and on the process of purifying the clan of its uncleanliness. The Wawilak rituals place their emphasis on the totems of one well, although the other wells are brought in by inference (all the snakes in the myth hold a conversation in the sky). The Wawilak rituals emphasize the ceremonial uncleanliness and the final purification of the group but with a different set of symbols from those of the Djunkgao rituals. The Narra ceremony repeats and thereby emphasizes uncleanliness and purification. The Wawilak rituals accent purification by the snake's swallowing the women, but rather explicitly symbolize profanement as a separate element in the Dua Narra kingfisher and spear dances, the center of this ritual.

This identification of the two myths and the fundamental sameness of the two rituals help us to obtain a deeper insight into the concepts of the Djunkgao than we could obtain if we had only the Narra rituals to analyze. The two sisters by their incestuous act lose the totems to man. This incestuous act also causes the cycle of the seasons and of reproduction. The symbol of this uncleanliness is the semen of their incestuous partners, and their purification consists of washing this impurity off their bodies. The Murngin people reenact symbolically the mythological cleansing in the ritual of the community baptism. The water cleanses them as it does in the symbol of the snake (water)

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796 swallowing the women in the Wawilak myth. The bathers in the
773 Djunkgao rite must cover themselves entirely just as the Wawilak
182 women were covered by the snake (water) in the western myth.
783 After this the males are sufficiently clean to eat their ritual bread ceremonially.

773 In the Narra there is less definition of the various symbols than in
796 the Wawilak group of rituals, and in the Yiritja Narra even less than in the Dua. In the Yiritja Narra the great floods bring the totems; the dances are basically the same as in the Dua, where there is the dance with the totems on the men's ground, the calling out of the entire list of clans of the moiety, the dancing in the ring, the use of spears, the ceremonial bathing, the later showing of totems, and the eating of communion bread. In the Yiritja there is no deviation from the fundamental pattern of the Dua Narra, but the mythology is explicitly attached to the ritual by making the foam (semen in the Dua ritual) land in the Yiritja ritual; and it is only by inference that the whole of the Yiritja Narra is seen to depend on the interpretation of the Dua Djunkgao ritual for its meaning; e.g., the ascendency of men over the women is demonstrated by calling out the names of the wells each night, which symbolizes the removal of the totems from the women.

796 Basically the totemic Narra ceremonies are, first, purification rites by which the whole group is "baptized" (and it is this element which is most emphatically accented); second, expressions of group solidarity in communal eating of purified totemic bread by the purified group; third, rites emphasizing both clan structure and rigid dual division (by showing clan totems and calling out names of clan wells, and by the division of the Narra ceremony into two—Dua and Yeritja—rituals when in reality it is but one). Of all the rituals involved in the high totemic ceremonies, the Yiritja Narra is the simplest and least elaborated in its expression and the Gunabibi and Ulmark the most proliferated and explicit.

773 The individual totems found in all the wells supposedly visited by
778 Wawilak and Djunkgao women are all pieces of the general mosaic of the myth. For example, in the Liaalaomir where the Wawilak women visited there are the following totems: carpet snake's head, carpet snake's anus, caterpillar, carpet snake, carpet snake's neck, carpet snake's tongue (this is also lightning), an iguana, green ant, singing stick, a palm tree, ridgepole of a house, house rafters, uprights, forked stick used for house construction, sea gull, wood brought in on the

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associated with mortuary rites or cleansing ceremonies throughout the area, but in the north and east some of them also function as curing rituals for sickness.

The Narra and garma myths all express the fundamental idea of the movement backward and forward of the tides in the spring floods either in the present period or in the mythological past; the Wawilak myth and ritual leave out the movement of the tide except in a minor way, and concentrate on the flood. The essential formula of the Narra links together the sacred names of the moiety's clan water holes: the leaders shout out during an important part of the ritual in fairly exact order in a Dua Narra first only Dua clans and in a Yiritja Narra first only Yiritja clans. The moiety clan water holes are further tied together: in the Dua Narra by relating the names of the clan wells to the wanderings of the Djunkgao sisters; in the Yiritja by the actions of the various mythological creatures. That the underlying ideas of the Djunkgao myth are ceremonial uncleanliness and purification by means of the ritual is demonstrated by its following fundamental elements: (1) the women's wanderings and planting of the totems; (2) their incest and defilement; and (3) the taking of the totems by the men.

The Yiritja Narra account shows clearly that the spring flood is made not only by the rain but also by the rise of the water in the totem water holes which overflow at this time. In this ritual it seems rather an overflow of the totem well than a flood coming directly from the rain. In any case, the well water is always a strong contributing element to the flood covering the earth. The rise of the water, then, is something more than the symbolization of the flood as male and spiritual, as in the Djungguan; it is here an actual outflow of water from the sacred centers of the land, which causes the growth of new plants and animals and the refertilizing of the earth. It is the male principle fertilizing the earth. The women are covered with semen and made fertile, as is the land. The "white stuff" on the Djunkgao women was unclean and compelled purification by washing because the clansmen of old had broken the most fundamental law of the social code. The social relations needed purification and the bathing ritual resulted. The modern social organization needs purifying for past misbehaviors, particularly those of a sexual nature (see pages 78-90 for examples of sexual code infringement). It is felt that nature, inextricably organized on the pattern of man's social organization, needs purifying as man does, since both are in the same social

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category, and when man "keeps from being sick" he at the same time keeps nature from being sick. The rituals keep both man and nature well and strong and allow them to reproduce and the fertility cycle of both to continue.

An Analysis of the Ritual Logic of Murngin Totemism

We have now finally reached the point where we can analyze Murngin religious thought, for we have presented in detail, first, the relations of the myths to the rituals; second, the symbolization of the phenomena of nature in myth and ritual; and third, the symbolization of the social organization and its various segments in Murngin ritual. The articulation of these very complex elements of society and nature into a conceptual configuration which is Murngin totemic logic cannot be presented coherently by description alone. It will be necessary to resort to charts.

To delineate properly the logic of Murngin totemism, it is necessary first to examine what the ritual realities are in man's relations to the physical environment of northeastern Arnhem Land. We shall be concerned not so much with the obvious realities of the natural environment as with the social attitudes which man has in relation to the various aspects of this environment; both concepts are comprised in the single statement that nature acts on man and man acts on nature.

The technological behavior of man describes his realistic and logical adjustment to his environment. Within this realm of his behavior his attitudes are entirely logical, and his techniques relate him in a scientific way to nature. It will be necessary to restate a few general facts about the natural world in which the Murngin lives. This world consists of two seasons, a rainy and a dry. Man's adaptation to the former is difficult and his adaptation to the latter is comparatively simple and without effort. The total effects on man of the dry and rainy seasons, socially and physically, are felt as comparative degrees of ill-being and well-being (in behavioristic language, the effects of positive and negative stimuli.)

The Murngin definitely recognize the real relation in nature of the wet and dry seasons, and they understand that the former is necessary to produce the latter. They are also conscious of the physical as well as the social effects on man of the two seasons (see native interpretations of the two seasons and man in them, pages 378-386). The

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765 533 trumpet is brought out and accompanies the singing sticks in the songs.

(13) Yurlunggur.

All the songs before this were the garma variety and could be sung in the general camp. Now the leader takes up the Djungguan song itself. Yurlunggur is blown over the bones just as over the initiates in the Djungguan ceremony. "Yurlunggur is trying to take the dead man's spirit to the totem well. 'You can come to me now,' he says."

765 While Yurlunggur has been trumpeting, the dué and galle (male) have tied up the bones in a paper-bark bundle. They take the bones and leave them back in the bush. They make a camp for themselves a short distance from the main camp and construct a special bush house in which to place the bones. Later—there is no specified interval of time—these relatives bring the bones back to the edge of the camp. Yurlunggur is supposed to come with them, which means that the totemic trumpet is brought out. The leader pours water on the two men (dué and galle), then covers them 765 with red ocher. While this occurs, a new sequence of songs is sung:

533 (1) Basket (that which is used for the bones).
(2) Tree (wood used for rangas).
(3) Mangrove where the catfish makes his spears.
(4) Catfish (bartna).
(5) Small fish again.
(6) Fresh water for washing.
(7) River water.
(8) The log trap placed in rivers for catching fish.

It is at this point that the men are painted with red ocher.

765 During the period in which the bones are left in the bush the women are told that the snake has swallowed them and taken them away with him. They are not told that the bones are in the hands of the men until the bones are turned over to the women to be carried by them until final disposal.

[783] The bath and red ocher for the men who have cleaned the bones and kept them in the bush are not only to take away the stench from the men, but also to remove their ceremonial uncleanliness. The parents of the dead [431] always ask these relatives to perform the service of cleaning and keeping the bones, and in return for this service they give presents. The presents usually are the best, which means that the ranga is given. It will be noticed that the two, dué and galle, belong to one moiety and the dead man and his parents to the other; the exchange of services is across the moiety line.

765 The stench of the body which is upon the dué and galle is not different 775 from the sweat of a living man and just the same as the spirit itself. If

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 OI17 Murngin OI17

the various creatures and plants, created a sacred waterhole, Milmigarak, which later was inhabited by the giant mythical serpent, *wangaruk*.

One day the elder sister, when dipping water from the springs, accidentally polluted it with her menstrual blood.[42] This pollution so annoyed the serpent that he caused the water to boil over, i.e. flow out.[43] Even at the present day, when *wangaruk* becomes annoyed by the presence of unauthorized trespassers, he tries to leave the waterhole. But as soon as his head is visible the aboriginal medicine-men send him back by singing powerful chants, for should *wangaruk* start wandering over the land he would destroy everyone.

Wangaruk is of great length and size. He has a prominent nose, large eyes and a luxuriant beard. His head, however, is entirely bald, having the same appearance as a grey weathered boulder.[44] Although *wangaruk* has a voice like thunder, he does not appear to be associated with either the rain or the rainbow. Only the old men of the tribe are allowed to visit Milmigarak, drink its waters, or catch its fish.

On Pl. 87A the cross-hatched disc in the centre of the painting is the waterhole, Milmigarak. The other discs are non-sacred waters in the surrounding country, and the parallel lines native roads between them. The darker-coloured cross-hatched panels *a*, *b*, etc., represent the menstrual blood of the *Djunkgao* sister which polluted the waterhole.

The Djunkgao Sisters at Milingimbi

This is a fragment of a myth from Milingimbi, which relates how the *Djunkgao* women created a spring of water at Milmur, a place on the mainland, south of Elcho Island.

On Pl. 87D the two women, shown as lizards, with their carrying-baskets beside them, occupy the upper part of the painting. The design below symbolizes the sacred waterhole created by them.[45]

The Djunkgao Sisters at Goulburn Island

Plate 86E depicts a swamp at Goulburn Island which is associated with the *Djunkgao* sisters.

On panel *b* are a number of water-birds catching fish, one of them having a fish in its mouth. Panel *a*, which is similar to the sand-hill design of the *wredjingu mata* of Port Bradshaw,[46] represents the ripples on the swamp caused by the water-birds as they chase the fish.

42. This fragment has been borrowed from the *Wuradilk* myth, see p. 278.
43. The mythical serpents in the Oenpelli area cause their waterholes to overflow when they are annoyed (see p. 208, p. 210, etc.).
44. The head of the mythical serpent living in the spring near the Elcho Island mission station is said to resemble a stone.
45. This design is similar to that used for the sacred wells, shown in Pl. 87A. This may be a *mata* design belonging to a *dua* language group (see Fig. 61F).
46. The same design is present on a crayon drawing dealing with *Djunkgao* at Port Bradshaw. Berndt, 1952, Pl. 7.

The Totemic Place, Jalboa, of the Thunder-man, Tjambuwal

About four miles north-west of Yirrkalla is a short headland, from the point of which a small reef extends into the sea. This headland, called Jalboa, is the totem place of the thunder-man, *Tjambuwal* (Fig. 57).

On its southern end the distorted rock strata of the cliff have formed into a number of more or less vertical irregular gutters which, according to the myth, are made when *Tjambuwal* urinates. On the point of the cliff about fifty yards to the north are the rocks which are shattered by *Tjambuwal* (Pl. 91E) when he strikes them with his club, *burununda*, and on its slopes a number of white stones, *milarik* (Pl. 91F). It is these, or the spirits of them, which *Tjambuwal* throws into the sky to make thunder-clouds.[69]

On the adjacent beach are two small casuarina trees (Pl. 91A), once the bodies of *Tjambuwal* and his relatives. Not far from these casuarinas is a large fig tree (Pl. 91B), the transformed body of another of *Tjambuwal's* relatives. The fruit of this fig tree is sacred, as indeed is the whole area at the base of the cliff. No one would dare to eat that fruit, for he would surely die, nor would he dig for ochre in the base of the cliff for, if he did, *Tjambuwal* would kill him. Should the women even look at the place where *Tjambuwal* urinated they must atone for their misdeeds by a gift of food to the members of the thunder-man's totem. If not, *Tjambuwal* will make them ill.

The Thunder-man, Bolngo (or Tjambuwal) at W'ulwulwi, Koolatong River

This version of the *Tjambuwal* myth places the totemic site at Wulwulwi, on the Koolatong River. The myth differs slightly in detail, but not in general form, from that at Yirrkalla; *Tjambuwal* becomes *Bolngo*;[70] the looped clouds, *wulmu*, become *djalijal*; and *Bolngo* urinates from a high tree,[71] instead of, as in the *Tjambuwal* myth, from the clouds.[72]

On the middle panel of Pl. 89B is *Bolngo* urinating on the ground beneath. This urine later rises into the sky and becomes rain. There is a line of hailstones, *milarik* (shown as ovals) to the right of *Bolngo*, and looped clouds, *djalijal*, above his head. The series of squares[73] on either side of *Bolngo* symbolize the open sea near Wulwulwi.

The Thunder-man, Tjambuwal, at Naitjulma, Arnhem Bay

When the thunder-man, *Tjambuwal*, was camped at Naitjulma, Arnhem Bay, two of his sons died and their bodies were transformed into white stones, called *milarik* or *jarambai*. At the beginning of the wet season the thunder-man throws

69. See bark paintings of *Bolngo*, Pl. 89B.
70. Elkin and the Beards (1950), p. 41, refer to the thunder-man under the name of Bungu.
71. See myth of Bolngo on page, p. 393. 72. See myth of *Tjambulwal*, p. 262.
73. This is the design belonging to the *dua tjapu mata* of Caledon Bay language group (Fig. 63A).

[text continues on p. 289]

5: Webb M-5 (ca. 1930) 1934
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Burial and Mourning

Upon the death of a person, especially one of honour and influence, violent expressions of grief are indulged in. The men stand in groups, with spears reversed, with tears streaming down their faces, with the whole body relaxed into a drooping posture, and mournfully chant the death song of their tribe. Meanwhile, the women keep up a dreadful wailing, cut their heads with flints, shells, or sticks until the blood pours down their naked bodies, and throw themselves upon the ground in an utter abandonment of grief. These performances are repeated several times over, especially if fresh parties arrive at the camping ground. 152 763

Before the body is disposed of, there is painted upon it the totemic design of the horde to which the deceased belonged, and to the spirit or totemic centre of which the soul of the departed is believed to return. The body is disposed of either by interment in the ground or by being placed upon a platform constructed for the purpose. 764

In either case, after the body has decomposed, the bones are recovered by male relatives and painted with red ochre. A ceremony is then held, during which the bones are handed over to the female relatives of the deceased, and by them are carried about, sometimes for several years. For this purpose a cylinder of bark is constructed, which is also painted with the person's totemic symbols. Finally, another elaborate ceremony is held, when the bones are broken and deposited in a tall hollow post, which is planted upright in the ground at any convenient place. 765

While the body is awaiting burial, certain near male relatives of the deceased make in the ground a representation of the particular totemic centre, and there ceremonially partake of food, which is known as "Wukandi." None of this food must be given to outsiders, nor must these men partake of food elsewhere. In this way they enter into communion with their departed brother, who is believed to be present with them in these ceremonial meals. 764

Shortly after the disposal of the body, the near relatives of the deceased pass through a purification ceremony, known as "Wontjurr," during which they are washed in a representation of the pool which constitutes the totemic or spirit centre of their 764 783

5: Webb M-5 (ca. 1930) 1934
OI17 Murngin OI17

horde. Until this ceremony has been held, these individuals must not share food with others, and so are, for the time being, shut off from the normal life of the community. 764 783

Behind all these beliefs there exists a very rich mythology concerning the existence and exploits of culture heroes who are believed to have originated the customs of the people. 773

"Speak but the word; the Evangel shall awaken
Life in the lost, the hero in the slave."

—F. W. H. Myers

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OI17 Murngin OI17

796 535 831 Pythons. One sits on the thighs of the other in the trench, and they have "coitus". These ceremonies are spread over a number of days, often with a certain amount of repetition.

In the meantime, the *jiritja* men have been making the *jelmalandji* 796 778 emblems. It is said that "the *jiritja* have got a *dua* job", and they hunt all the *dua* away from the special place near the sacred ground where [616] the manufacture is in progress. This "giving the job" to the *jiritja* is termed *ir'wondji* or *maralwa*. They must be paid with food, clothing, tobacco and indigenous objects, not on the sacred ground but in the main camp. The *jelmalandji* are twelve to twenty feet in length, and about two and a half feet wide at the centre. They are formed with a solid pole, around which pads of grass and paperbark (and in these days blankets and bagging) are tied with native fibres. The outer covering of bark is then smeared with arm blood and red-ochre, on to which is fastened birds' down or wild cotton so that a meandering pattern is formed, symbolizing Julunggul. At the apex of the "post" [301] is a bunch of cockatoo feathers "like a man wears in his hair". Both *jelmalandji*, one larger than the other, have similar designs. But although one represents Julunggul, the other is said to be the "cabbage" or "wild coconut" (*gulwiri*) palm, which was standing near the Wauwalak's hut, or at the palm-tree swamp from which the blood was washed down to the sacred well (or billabong). Aborigines [773] explain, "they made the Snake out of that tree", meaning either that the first *jelmalandji* was constructed from the palm tree, or that the Snake itself was derived from it. The latter is probably correct, for this "wild coconut" palm is said to be the spirit of Julunggul: "their spirits were standing in the shape of palm trees near Muruwul, when the Julunggul emerged from the well to swallow the Wauwalak".

While the *jiritja* are making the *jelmalandji*, the *dua* prepare the 796 237 feather down for body decoration: this has come from the *jiritja*, who are paid for it. It is the *dua* who play the most important part in 301 616 the ceremonial dancing; and while the final touches are being put to the *jelmalandji*, the *dua* actors decorate themselves, sticking on the feathers with arm blood. When everything is ready, the two moiety [783] groups meet each other, and rub sweat over one anothers' eyes;[6] after this, each group may see what the other has done. The *jiritja* examine the body designs of the *dua*, and the latter may observe the *jelmalandji*.

6. That is, the *jiritja* rub sweat from their armpits over the eyes of the *dua*, and *vice versa*. This process is carried out when new *ranggu* objects or *nurelin* ceremonies are seen for the first time, or when novices or visitors are observing sacred dancing or ceremonial emblems (objects, body or bark paintings, and so on). It means that their eyes may now be opened, they can now see "with sacredness". "The old people have to do this to us before we can see"; for, as one informant explained, "it is like moving over some of the old Law to the youngest (younger generation), and we get trouble if we look straight away". It is called *bunggun'nirijamma*.

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OII7 Murngin-OII7

On the same evening, the young boys "passing through" the Kunapipi are placed on the heaped-up earth beside the *ba'uma* (*kanala*), and a shallow trench, some fifty feet long, is extended from one end. The *jelmalandji* have not yet been brought out. Various groups of men, representing mainly opossums, dance down this trench towards the boys. The initiates are moved to the shallow trench, and the men dance along it into the *ba'uma*. Then the boys are moved and placed in the *ba'uma* itself: this is the core of their Kunapipi experience. They are covered with bark and told to go to sleep; and as they lie there, "covered up in the hut like the Wauwalak Sisters", men dance the yam, opossum, wild honey, rat, wallaby, iguana, native companion and kangaroo – all those animals, birds, reptiles and vegetables which the Wauwalak attempted to cook. They dance down the shallow trench and almost on to the boys.

Then, suddenly, the bark that covers the boys is removed: they are dazed, as if from sleep. The older Kunapipi leaders step forward and, taking sweat from under their armpits, rub the palms of their hands across the eyes of the boys. They tell them to look up: "See, the Julunggul are emerging from the waters!"

"Which way?" they ask.

As they look they see the two Snakes standing beside the *ba'uma*, each supported by one man: these are the two *jelmalandji*, one the Julunggul and the other the "palm" tree. The boys are "very surprised", asking "What's this? Where did they come from?"

"They are the *jelmalandji*", reply the old leaders. And the two *dua* men holding the *jelmalandji* begin to shake them, "making the Snakes dance".

"Ah! ah!" The boys keep staring up at the great towering *jelmalandji*.

Then the men dance a series of totemic dances, similar to those mentioned above, before the *jelmalandji* and the boys.

These are followed by the spectacular "pokiti" head-dress dance, performed by two of the older men. They wear tall, conically shaped head-dresses, built up on top of the head from a basis of grass or bark pads, bound tightly with human-hair twine so that they taper to a point; this in turn is decorated with arm blood upon which down has been stuck to form the Snake design, and cockatoo or native companion feathers are attached to the apex. The word "pokiti" is pidgin English; the real "outside" secular name (widely known) is *kundja*, and the "inside" sacred name *milali*; when the two old men dance together they are called *jalwaru-* (or *jalwul*) *milali*. The actors are decorated with birds' down, and bunches of leaves are attached to their upper arms.

The "pokiti" itself represents the short pandanus or screw palm, seen by the Wauwalak, growing in the swamp at Muruwul: the movement of the head-dress in the dance signifies the pandanus

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
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On the final night, the Kitjin and the *ngamamali* dancing are repeated. The Kunapipi partners are ochred and heavily greased. The men sing and the women dance. As the singing and dancing continue, a man will rise and go over to his partner, take her by the arm, and lead her into the bush for sexual intercourse. One by one the men stand and take their partners into the surrounding shadows; and since there are usually fewer women than men, some women may have coitus a number of times. Men too may, if they choose, have coitus more than once during the night, either with the same partner, or with another woman whose husband has already been approached, and presents exchanged. Women, at this time, stimulated by days of anticipation, take a special pride in the number of men who copulate with them. After a man has had sexual intercourse with a woman, her husband comes to him and rubs his sweat on the man's legs and arms, so that he will not become ill from this ritual behaviour.

There are several variations in the above pattern of ceremonial copulation, and we mention the two most important. While the dancing is in progress, the Kunapipi sexual partners may retire to a specially constructed shade or hut (which is the *murlk* of the Wauwalak) and have coitus. The woman either remains in the hut to receive other men, or returns to the dancing. Should there be more men than women at the ceremony, the woman will most likely remain in the hut for the evening, accepting one man after another. In this case, there may be several "huts" or windbreaks near the sacred ground, each woman taking possession of one. (Not all the female dancers retire to these huts; as mentioned, there are some who do not have partners.) This conforms more to the pattern of ceremonial copulation in the Roper River Kunapipi.

The second variation is in the manner of ceremonial copulation (the *ka'rangara*) throughout central-western Northern Territory. After the dancing, the women form two rows, according to their moieties, on the sacred ground; they are slightly apart from, though alongside each other. All lie down and assume a position ready for coitus. Their male partners dance forward and take positions before one line of women, while on the opposite side another row of men dances into the ground and stands in front of the other line. The men have their backs to one another, and their two rows are between the two rows of women; this arrangement prevents husbands from watching their wives. Then the men begin to have intercourse, some awaiting their turn. When a man has finished he goes to one side

[833] himself above the woman, or inserts paper-bark between their bodies. It is said that the sweat of the woman is possessed of great potency which, if transferred to the man, will cause him harm (that is, affect the specific sacredness of the act). However, this is not found in the north-eastern Arnhem Land area.

616 ***"Dual division"*** or ***"dual organisation"***, cuts right through the social organisation of Arnhem Land (as in many other parts of Australia and elsewhere), dividing it into two halves or "moieties", so that half the clans, with their totems, fall into one moiety and half into the other moiety.

In Arnhem Land the moieties are called ***dua*** and ***yiritja***, but they are not always actually named and the ***dual division*** may be present and may function without the moieties bearing names. Often the natives believe that they can detect physical differences between the members of the two moieties. Sometimes they assert that the people of one moiety have curly hair and those of the other straight, or that there are differences in eye or skin colour. There is often a marked ***"opposition"*** between moieties to which formal expression is given on ceremonial occasions. This formal or "organised" opposition finds expression, and is often stressed, in the mythology, and especially in totemism, the whole of the totemic organisation being divided between the two moieties.

784 ***Euphoria.*** A state of social well-being brought about by the correct
● 783 observance of ritual behaviour, especially of tabus, in contrast
673 with ***disphoria***, a "ritual state of sin" or "bad luck" due to the breaking of tabus. Generally a formal rite of expiation or "purification" of a type laid down by tradition, must be carried out by the individual or by the group to restore a state of ***euphoria.***

582 ***Exogamy*** is simply the rule of "marrying out" as opposed to ***endogamy***—marriage within the group. In Arnhem Land society the family, clan and moiety are all strictly exogamous and each of these groups is comprised of people with whom marriage is not only not permitted, but to whom, under the kinship system, the pattern of behaviour is incompatible with that towards a wife or husband.

592 ***Family.*** This is the fundamental unit in social life. In Australia it
595 is the group consisting of a man and his wife or wives, (for these people are ***polygynous***), with their young children, own or adopted. Each family lives as a separate, and to a large extent independent, unit, within the camp of the horde. It makes its own fire around which its domestic life is centred and at which it prepares its own food. Around the fireside the food is eaten and here the family sleeps and lives its own separate life.

621 ***Horde***, is the name given to the group which at any time actually ***occupies*** a clan territory. It is the important functional group and is generally the war-making and law-making group and is an independent social and political unity, but its membership may change, and it lacks the permanence and stability of the clan, the group which a man enters by birth alone.

10: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1958
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159 852 869 men told me he was the great Father Python who had come in the spirit and was made true for us black men at this ceremony for him. They said when I grew older I could see him, but that now I was too little and that my eyes were not strong enough and that it took much "power" to look at him like old men must have when they see him.

159 852 After a little while I heard all the men calling out with some strange sounds. I knew later that they were using the cry of a wedge-tailed eagle. They were beating their spears with their spear-throwers. They came nearer and nearer and finally two of them picked us up and put our legs around their necks and over their shoulders. We rode on their backs as we marched to the main camp where the women were. When they carried me on their shoulders I thought they were sure to kill me. I was more afraid. I held my head down and shut my eyes. I thought first, "Maybe they will kill me," then I would think, "No, maybe they are going to burn me." I would think back and forth like that. When we got in the women's camp they took me down from off the man's shoulders and one man lay down on the ground and I was placed on top of him and some other men held me with my legs spread apart so that I could not move. I cried and cried. Just before they did this one old man gave me a drink of water. When I started crying one of the men put a small basket in my mouth for me to bite on and so the women couldn't hear my crying. All the men had surrounded me and I was in the middle of a circle. I could hear the women crying while they danced around our circle (pages 286-288).

[304] One man took a stone spear and broke it and took a small piece of it and cut the skin from off the head of my penis. Then I was picked up and a man ran with me back to the men's ground. I was crying and crying, for I was very afraid and the cutting had hurt me. When we got near the men's ground he put me down by a small fire and took some water and washed where I had been cut and took his hands and put them over the fire and heated them and placed them over my penis. This made me feel much better. I was thirsty. I asked for water. The old men said that while we had been out in that ground the whole world had been covered with salt water again because the tide had come in and covered everything. There was no drinking water now, he said. They told me this for one day and would not let me drink. All that day I went without water; next day they gave me some (pages 287-288).

159 783 852 A day or two after I had been cut some old men took me, with my father, to the men's ground. When we got there I found they had two logs laid down and two more laid across them. They were placed over some stones that were as hot as fire. A big fire had been built over these stones to make them hot, before the logs were placed on top of them. All the old men were

10: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1958
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sitting around singing. I was afraid again because I did not know what they were going to do. I did not cry. I just looked down and said nothing. They told me to stand up on the logs and squat down over the hot stones. An old man stood by. He had some lily leaves that had been soaked in water. He threw the lily leaves on the hot stones. Steam came up all around me. This went inside my anus and into my body and all through it and came out my mouth. That is what those old men told me. 159 783 852

They told me it would make me very strong and clean me all out and make me all the same as the power song. I know now they did this for this reason and so that I wouldn't be greedy and could go a long time without food and without drink.

Two or three old men warmed their hands over the fire and put them to my mouth and talked to me. They said, "You are no longer a baby. You are growing up and going to be a big man. You must not swear at anybody. You must not lie. You must not chase after other men's wives." 159 852 [867]

Another old man rubbed my navel. He said, "This will make you very strong and you won't get hungry quickly and you won't try to eat too much food." One old man sat beside me. He picked up a piece of kangaroo. He said, "This one is not kangaroo. What do you call this one?" Another old man sat on the other side of me and whispered the power name of kangaroo in my ear. I called out the secret name of this food when I swallowed it. When I said this, all the old men who were sitting around in the men's chorus sang out, "Yai! Yai!"

That first old man then named all the kinds of foods that grow in the bush and that are game and that are fish, and he said this same thing to me and that other old man told me their power names. All the time the leader beat his singing sticks and sang the sacred names of these foods. This was the first time I had ever heard the secret language which only we men understand. No women hear these things. Women are profane and they would spoil them. These are things only for men to know. Children and women are not strong enough (pages 288-290). [198] [562]

He Grows Up—A Foreign Woman Seduces Him

My father and I went to visit my nati's people at Elcho Island (map, page 40). I was larger then, and my circumcision had been a few dry seasons in the past. Some Macassar men were there, and they said that the white men were getting very mean and cheeky and that they were going to stop the Macassar men from coming. They said that this was their last voyage and they would never come again. They said that white men were all the same as animals and that they were big men and had hair on them and were very fierce and they just killed people because they liked to kill. 159 648

11: Webb M-5 (ca. 1930) 1933 OI17 Murngin OI17

the patient is washed from head to foot by having water poured over him. This ceremony is believed to be particularly efficacious in cases of injury which have caused bleeding. In such cases not only does it aid the person's recovery, but also removes the tabu attaching to the shed blood. If, in the course of hunting, a man has been so injured, he must not give of his catch to another until by this ceremony he has been cleansed. This same ceremony is also used for the purification of the relatives of a recently deceased person. If a man be near his sacred pool the ceremony is performed there and he is washed in the actual " holy water " itself.

The most elaborate medical treatment of which I have knowledge is that carried out in cases of extreme constipation or for a severe attack of indigestion leading to a distension of the stomach and known as *worba*. First of all a rough platform of sticks is constructed. On this platform is laid a thick covering of leafy branches of *maipin* (ironwood tree) and on these leaves a covering of wet grass from some fresh water pool or swamp.

The sand beneath the platform is then scooped out and a fire made, which must be wholly of *maipin*, the leaves, bark, gum, and wood being used. When the fire is well burning the patient is placed, face downward, on the platform already prepared, a covering of boughs or paper-bark is placed over him, and there he is left for several hours to steam. He is then turned over on his back, and thus spends several more hours. At the end of the day he is bathed with cold water, and will almost certainly feel relieved, but if not, the process may be repeated the following day. In cases where no relief is afforded it is consequently known that the patient's condition is the result of evil magic. It is believed to be produced by some sorcerer getting hold of something belonging to the patient—his loin-cloth or *balara* (pubic shield) being considered particularly effective. After " singing " this article he opens out the coals and ashes of his fire, and in the centre digs a small hole, into which he crams it. He then fills the hole with earth, scrapes back the coals and ashes, and once more " sings " over it his evil chant, at the same time naming the man he wishes to injure. This operation results in a stoppage of the man's bowels, and so produces a condition which nothing can relieve, and which ultimately ends in death.

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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vital organs, and it made off into the scrub. He followed the wounded animal, and in the ensuing scuffle was himself seriously wounded, and had his thigh laid open by the protruding spearhead. However, he killed the animal and cooked some of it to take back to camp, and propped the rest in the branches of a tree. When he came limping into camp, his friends saw the blood and asked what had happened. Some of them went off to get the meat, but his closest relatives said with characteristic and genuine feeling: 'We will not eat that meat; it has Marjirry's blood on it.' It was clearly a case of 'mumbakuta' and the spilt blood had to be ceremonially washed away and his body purified by washing in a totemic well. Marjirry's father began the ceremony by declaring: 'No one is to eat that meat except my son's wife and children; it is mumbakuta.' He scooped a hole in the sand resembling his horde's totemic well, and when the rest of the kangaroo arrived, the closest relatives ate it, carefully buried the bones and skin in the 'well', and lit a fire over it so that the camp-dingoes could not desecrate them.

By the end of the next week Marjirry felt better, so his father told him that he must 'wash' and that he would make him 'koota-koota', or ceremonially clean, in their totemic well. Everyone sat by the 'well' containing the buried bones and skin. After some singing and dancing, Marjirry stood over the well whilst the leader 'sang' the horde's thanks to the spirit-Ancestors for restoring him to health. Sand was poured over him, and he washed imaginary blood off his body and smeared himself with red ochre. However, before the affair could be considered finished with, Marjirry again went hunting and brought his first kill to his father, who announced that everyone could eat it, and in the ensuing meal thanked them for having observed the tabu. To break this tabu and eat the victim's food, or use his utensils, is a breach of etiquette and a violation of sacred and personal

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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and everything connected with it, including fish, turtle, and other food carried in it, were tabu to women and children. It appeared that two days previously the horde had migrated from the south and had brought a skeleton in the canoe, thereby rendering it tabu to women and children. It was another case of mumbakuta.

Sons and sons-in-law of the deceased person brought the fish ashore and ate them around a totemic well scooped in the sand. The leavings were carefully buried in the 'well' and the customary fire lit over them. The camp then went to the canoe on the beach, lit a fire on the sand, and taking leafy branches held them in the smoke and switched them over the canoe to hunt off the ghost of the dead man. Once the skeleton's influence on the canoe was removed, it was safe to travel in, and food could be eaten from it.

Skeletons are customarily carried in bark parcels and exert far-reaching influences, and 'mali', or ghosts, accompanying such bones must be placated. In an exchange I made with Yama for his father's bones (which I wanted to send to the Sydney Museum), I bartered several items for the complete skeleton in its bark cylinder with his horde's totemic symbols painted on the outside. Unknown to me, there were two powerful influences in the bark parcel, one in the bones and the other in the totemic symbols on the bark itself; for such bones laid a tabu on all they touched, just as they would have done if carried in a canoe, and the bark cylinder, by having a totemic sign painted on it, was sacred. Among the items I had exchanged for the skeleton was an axe, so it was agreed that for ceremonial purposes, this should absorb the tabu from the bones and also from the bark cylinder. Thereafter only the nearest relatives could touch it. To remove the skeleton tabu from the axe, Yama cut open a tree containing a bee's nest. Because of the tabu, only fully initiated men of the horde could eat it; but after the meal, the axe was painted to make it

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safe for everyone to use. But the influence of the totem on the cylinder still remained in the axe, and it could therefore be used only by near relatives. To overcome this, Yama cut a canoe, thereby transferring the totemic influences to it. The dug-out was 'de-ghosted' in much the same way as if it had carried the actual bones; fish caught from it were ceremonially eaten, and it was switched with smoking twigs to drive off the tabu.

'Ghostly' help is freely sought by hunters to assist them in their search for food. It is generally accepted that if the ghost, or mali, of a dead man is harnessed it will assist in the hunt by rounding up fish, birds, or animals. A ghost dims the eyes of the game so they cannot see clearly, blocks their ears so they cannot hear the hunter, and plays such havoc with their noses that he is unrecognizable.

To obtain the assistance of such a ghost, a hunter must carry a 'maiwola' or small piece of bone, hair, skin, or blood from the corpse. Small bones, hair, or other parts of a body, may be had for the asking when a corpse is being dismembered in any normal burial ceremony, and these 'hunting-charms' are wrapped in bark and hung round the neck. The ghost, or mali, lurks near its skeleton and, as in the instance of a skeleton carried in a canoe, exerts influence over it and all that it touches. But when a hunter carries a piece of the body as a charm, he is able to control the ghost so that it does his bidding, and when he is hunting the ghost follows the charm. If it happens that several men have obtained charms from the same corpse, and in different parts of the country go hunting at the same time, the ghost will serve one and then hurry off to help another. This explains why charms are not always effective, for if a hunter catches nothing, that is because the ghost is otherwise engaged, or is away lurking by the main part of its skeleton, which is wrapped in bark and carried by a tribal mother.

Any strange event can be readily explained by attributing

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Burial Rites and Cannibalism

DEATH and burial customs are much the same from one end of Arnhem Land to the other. Bodies are artistically painted and decorated before they are buried or exposed on platforms or in trees. Later the bones are collected and hoarded by relatives till they feel disposed to deposit them in decorated burial posts. In one district bones are removed from the body and parts of the flesh are eaten in an effort to form a link with the dead. This ceremonial cannibalism is confined to three or four hordes, but all Arnhem Land nomads attempt to communicate with their dead and call on them for assistance.

Mau's young son slipped from an overhanging tree, and in falling into the water struck his head on a canoe. No one saw the accident and he was not missed till his body drifted downstream to the beach. Two youths carried the corpse to the camp, but by coming into contact with it they had attracted its spirit or 'mali', which lodged in their skin. Before they dared to eat any food they must needs free themselves from the ghost by smearing red-ochre on their arms.

That night the entire camp of several inter-related hordes combined in a ceremony conducted by the child's grandfather. Alternately he wailed and sang a prayer to the spirit of his dead brother, the child's tribal grandfather, asking him to come and take the young spirit to the spirit world of 'Buralkor'. The camp set about preventing the spirit or mali from haunting them, and drove it from the camp by switching their bodies with heated leafy twigs.

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horde had for the deceased. In decimated hordes, and in the case of aged and unwanted wives, I have known bodies to be left in the ground and no attempt made to remove them.

Until bones have been collected and a mother is 'purified' she remains smeared with red-ochre and leads an inactive life. Relatives feed her and carry water from the well so that she will not desecrate it, for her child's ghost hovers near her and may attach itself to anything she handles. Similarly the relative who dismembers the body is tabu because of the ghost lodging in his skin, and he also is barred from waterholes and from feeding himself and becomes dependent on the hospitality of the family of the corpse. They are expected to treat him well even to the extent of making presents in return for the favour he has done them in attending to the corpse and running the risk of absorbing the ghost. Consequently there is no difficulty in getting 'grandsons' to run these risks, and the father not infrequently declines several offers and even limits the number of morticians to two or three.

This final purification ceremony is similar to the 'mum-bakuta' described in Chapter 5. Food is deposited in a totemic well conveniently scooped in the sand, and from this a ceremonial meal is eaten by the victims of the tabu and by certain near relatives. Waste food is piled into the well and burnt, to prevent dingoes disturbing it, and the tabu is finally lifted and the ghost removed when the relatives heat leafy twigs in a fire and switch their bodies. Alternatively, water or sand may be poured over the 'unclean' as they stand in the totemic well and smear themselves with red-ochre.

All deaths are regarded with a certain amount of suspicion, but the death of an active warrior is always attributed to sorcery. In such case the body is left in the ground for a very short time before the bones are collected. Smaller ones are